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Report of the Secretary-General on the implementation of Security Council resolution 1701 (2006)

Reporting period from 14 November 2013 to 27 February 2014

I. Introduction

1. The present report provides a comprehensive assessment of the implementation of Security Council resolution 1701 (2006) since my previous report of 13 November 2013 (S/2013/650).

2. In the midst of Lebanon's protracted political process and deteriorating security situation, the United Nations Interim Force in Lebanon (UNIFIL) area of operations remained relatively stable notwithstanding two serious incidents, both of them breaches of the cessation of hostilities and violations of resolution 1701 (2006). On 15 December, one Israel Defense Forces soldier was killed by a Lebanese Armed Forces soldier shooting across the Blue Line in an individual act. On 29 December, rockets launched from southern Lebanon against Israel were met with artillery response by the Israel Defense Forces without causing any injuries or damage. The incidents were contained through the enhanced utilization by the parties of the liaison and coordination arrangements established with UNIFIL. Lebanon and Israel continued to display their resolve to safeguard the quiet along the Blue Line and their commitment to resolution 1701 (2006), although their respective outstanding obligations under the resolution remain pending.

3. There was a worrying upsurge in terrorist incidents related to the conflict in the Syrian Arab Republic during the reporting period. Al-Qaeda-linked armed groups claimed responsibility for terrorist attacks in Lebanon, including a double suicide bombing of the Embassy of the Islamic Republic of Iran in Beirut on 19 November. As at 5 February, there were a further six suicide bombings in Beirut and Hermel, in which a total of 15 people were killed. On 27 December, former Minister Mohammed Chattah was assassinated in a car bomb attack, which also killed five other people. On 16 January, the Special Tribunal for Lebanon opened the in absentia trial of the persons accused in connection with the 2005 killing of former Prime Minister Rafiq Hariri.

4. Cross-border shelling and shooting from the Syrian Arab Republic into Lebanon continued, causing at least seven fatalities, injuries and material damage. There were also at least five air strikes by Syrian Government aircraft, as well as helicopter air strikes in which two Lebanese citizens reportedly were killed. The

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Lebanese Armed Forces reported continued smuggling of weapons across the Lebanese-Syrian border.

5. Ongoing conflict in the Syrian Arab Republic led to a continued influx of Syrians seeking shelter in Lebanon. As at 3 February 2014, there were 902,000 Syrian refugees assisted by the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) and partners, an increase of approximately 100,000 since my previous report.

6. On 15 February, following extensive dialogue across the political spectrum, Prime Minister designate Tammam Salam announced the formation of a 24-member Government of national interest, 11 months after the resignation of Prime Minister Mikati's Government. In accordance with Lebanese law, the period set for parliamentary sessions to choose a new President starts on 25 March 2014, ahead of the end of President Sleiman's term of office on 25 May 2014.

7. The International Support Group for Lebanon met in New York on 25 November, and members have continued to coordinate to mobilize support for Lebanon. On 15 December, a multi-donor trust fund was established by the World Bank in support of Lebanon's stabilization efforts. On 29 December, President Sleiman announced that Saudi Arabia would provide $3 billion to be used to purchase military equipment for the Lebanese Armed Forces from France.

II. Implementation of resolution 1701 (2006)

A. Situation in the area of operations of the United Nations Interim Force in Lebanon

8. In the evening of 15 December, an Israel Defense Forces officer was shot across the Blue Line by a Lebanese Armed Forces soldier in the vicinity of Ras Al-Naqoura (Sector West) and died from his injuries before reaching the hospital. In the ensuing hours, the Israel Defense Forces fired gunshots and flares towards Lebanon in the same general area, without causing personal injuries or material damage, before ceasing fire later in the night.

9. Upon being alerted about the incident by the Lebanese Armed Forces, UNIFIL immediately engaged with both sides, urging them to exercise restraint, requesting their cooperation, and keeping communication channels open to avert further escalation of the situation. The Lebanese Armed Forces at the highest level assured UNIFIL of its full commitment to the cessation of hostilities and explained that the shooting was an isolated incident perpetrated by a lone soldier. In the morning after the shooting, the Lebanese Armed Forces found and arrested the soldier, who had fled, and opened an investigation, as did UNIFIL. UNIFIL called an extraordinary tripartite meeting on 16 December at the request of the Israel Defense Forces.

10. The 16 December extraordinary tripartite meeting facilitated by UNIFIL sought to preserve confidence among the parties in order to fully restore the cessation of hostilities along the Blue Line, establish the facts and circumstances of the incident, and strengthen the existing security arrangements to prevent any such incidents from reoccurring. The presence of my Special Coordinator at the meeting attested to the particular concern of the United Nations. The Lebanese Armed Forces

expressed regret for the incident, which it reiterated was an isolated individual act, and said that the soldier involved would be held accountable under Lebanese law.

11. Cooperation by the parties allowed UNIFIL to complete its investigation quickly, which included two interviews of the perpetrator facilitated by the Lebanese Armed Forces. The UNIFIL investigation found that the soldier had acted alone without provocation or orders, and in contravention of the rules of engagement of the Lebanese Armed Forces, in a serious violation of resolution 1701 (2006). The firing at Lebanon across the Blue Line by the Israel Defense Forces was also in violation of resolution 1701 (2006). As a result of the investigation by the Lebanese Armed Forces, the Prosecutor for the Military Tribunal issued an indictment including charges of a serious offence on 29 January and directed the case to the Investigative Judge.

12. In a second serious incident, on 29 December, a rocket was launched against Israel from the El Khraibe area of Lebanon, in the UNIFIL area of operations (Sector East). Unknown assailants fired four rockets, one impacting Israel near Kiryat Shmona, two falling short of the Blue Line, and one, which misfired, falling a short distance from the launch. In retaliation for the attack, the Israel Defense Forces fired 33 artillery rounds across the Blue Line towards the launching area in Lebanon. No injury or material damage was caused by either the rocket attack or the Israeli response.

13. Immediately after the incident, the UNIFIL Head of Mission and Force Commander was in contact with his Israel Defense Forces and Lebanese Armed Forces counterparts to defuse the situation and prevent any further escalation. For the first time, UNIFIL communicated with the parties via a simultaneous videoconference link, the latest enhancement of the tripartite liaison apparatus.

14. UNIFIL began an investigation to determine the facts and circumstances of the rocket attack and inspected the launch sites and those impacted by the Israel Defense Forces artillery fire in Lebanon, as well as the rocket impact sites in Israel and Lebanon. UNIFIL intensified its patrols across the area of operations and focused its coordinated operations with the Lebanese Armed Forces on potential rocket launching sites, with a view to preventing any further attacks.

15. The Lebanese Armed Forces shared the results of its own investigation with UNIFIL, stating that the rockets had been launched using crude improvised launching pads and an electrical timer. At least two perpetrators were involved; they used a vehicle to carry the rockets in the early hours of the morning by secondary unpaved roads to avoid detection. Both parties told UNIFIL that they attributed the rocket firing to an extremist group aiming to cause general destabilization in the area. The attack has not been claimed to date.

16. At the 29 January tripartite meeting, UNIFIL recommended that the Lebanese Armed Forces, with the support of the Mission, further enhance security control over the area of operations to ensure that it is free of unauthorized armed elements, that the Lebanese authorities find the perpetrators of incidents and bring them to justice, and that both parties do the maximum to avoid escalation and to decrease tensions.

17. UNIFIL and the Lebanese Armed Forces maintained the same level of coordinated activities as during the previous reporting period, manning 10 permanent co-located checkpoints, 7 in Sector East and 3 in Sector West. In addition, UNIFIL

conducted training for the Lebanese Armed Forces with the aim of improving the effectiveness of combined operations as well as Lebanese Armed Forces tactical and operational capabilities. There was no notable change in the deployment of the Lebanese Armed Forces south of the Litani River, which remained at approximately two brigades.

18. UNIFIL observed a number of ground violations of the Blue Line committed mainly by Lebanese shepherds but also by farmers. Most ground violations were brief and took place in the Shab'a Farms area (Sector East). In addition, two men on 20 November and three boys on 11 January violated the Blue Line while fishing in the Wazzani River. UNIFIL protested the violations to the Lebanese Armed Forces, recalling that it is the primary responsibility of the Lebanese authorities to ensure full respect for the Blue Line in its entirety.

19. Also in the Shab'a Farms area, on 5 January, the Lebanese Armed Forces detained a man crossing the Blue Line into Lebanon. The man told the Lebanese Armed Forces that he was from the Syrian Arab Republic and was trying to join his parents who were refugees in Lebanon. On 13 January, a foreign domestic worker employed in Lebanon crossed the Blue Line into Israel and was detained by the Israel Defense Forces. Subsequently, her case was handled by the International Committee of the Red Cross and the Israeli Ministry of the Interior.

20. The Israel Defense Forces also violated the Blue Line once, on 15 January, when eight Israeli soldiers briefly crossed the Blue Line while patrolling in the vicinity of Meiss ej-Jebel. UNIFIL protested the violation to the Israel Defense Forces, who denied the violation.

21. There was no change in the status of the Israeli-occupied northern part of the village of Ghajar and the adjacent area north of the Blue Line, which remains a violation of resolution 1701 (2006) and of Lebanese sovereignty. Israel is yet to respond to the UNIFIL proposal regarding security arrangements aimed at facilitating the withdrawal of the Israel Defense Forces from the area, submitted to both parties on 25 June 2011. The Lebanese Armed Forces informed UNIFIL of its approval on 19 July 2011. UNIFIL continued to raise the issue with the Israeli authorities, who did not provide any new information.

22. Air violations, mostly by unmanned aerial vehicles, but also by fixed-wing aircraft, including fighter jets, continued almost daily in violation of resolution 1701 (2006) and of Lebanese sovereignty. UNIFIL protested all violations to the Israel Defense Forces, calling upon the authorities to cease them immediately. The Government of Lebanon also protested the violations. In a 19 November letter to UNIFIL, Lebanese Armed Forces Commander Lieutenant-General Kahwaji expressed deep concern regarding the continued violations of Lebanese airspace by the Israel Air Force, including reconnaissance and training flights conducted over the northern and eastern parts of the country. The Israeli authorities have denied conducting air training activities over Lebanon and continue to claim that the reconnaissance overflights are necessary security measures.

23. In addition to the 15 and 29 December incidents described above, there were several instances of tension across the Blue Line. The most serious occurred on 18 January, when UNIFIL observed a suspicious object close to the Blue Line in the vicinity of El Adeisse (Sector East). After UNIFIL secured the area and informed the parties of its discovery, an initial deployment of Israeli and Lebanese troops on both

sides of the Blue Line resulted in a tense stand-off. UNIFIL Geographic Information System (GIS) measurements determined that the object was located a few metres south of the Blue Line. Through the UNIFIL videoconference links, the Head of Mission and Force Commander opened a dialogue with the parties and was able to defuse the tension. Thereafter, the Israel Defense Forces removed the object.

24. On several occasions during the period, the Israel Defense Forces carried out maintenance work between the technical fence and the Blue Line and, in some cases, Israeli and Lebanese soldiers pointed their weapons at each other. UNIFIL troops on the ground defused the situation. On 24 December, a bush fire on the northern side of the Blue Line at B19 in the vicinity of Yarin (Sector West) triggered some explosions in a mine field. The Lebanese Armed Forces protested to UNIFIL, claiming that the Israel Defense Forces had ignited the fire. UNIFIL investigations could not substantiate the Lebanese claim and found no violation of the Blue Line.

25. UNIFIL generally enjoyed full freedom of movement throughout its area of operations. However, during the reporting period, UNIFIL troops encountered five cases of unfriendly behaviour by civilians, some involving aggressive conduct towards peacekeepers and, in one instance, theft of UNIFIL equipment. On 4 December, a UNIFIL patrol was diverted while passing through the village of Yatar (Sector West) and channelled into a constricted area where its movement was stopped by a group of approximately 20 young men. As the patrol commander dismounted the vehicle to approach the group, they pushed him aside and forcefully entered the vehicles, quickly removing some communication equipment and a map. The Lebanese Armed Forces then arrived on the scene and escorted UNIFIL back to its position. On 10 December, a UNIFIL patrol with six peacekeepers and two light vehicles was stopped in Blida (Sector East) by approximately 15 civilians. After a member of the patrol stepped out of his vehicle in an attempt to speak with the group, the group tried to remove his personal weapon, which he avoided by getting back into his vehicle. The civilians then slashed six tires of the patrol vehicles. On 16 January, civilians in a vehicle in the vicinity of El Adeisse approached UNIFIL troops and accused them of taking their photographs, demanding that they hand over their equipment. To avoid escalation, the UNIFIL troops handed over a memory card. On 23 January, in the vicinity of Hanin (Sector West), a civilian car overtook a UNIFIL patrol and stopped a short distance ahead, signalling the patrol for assistance. As UNIFIL soldiers proceeded to assist the driver, some civilians arrived on motorized scooters, surrounded the patrol and threw large rocks, causing damage to UNIFIL vehicles but no injuries.

26. UNIFIL protested all the incidents to the Lebanese authorities, impressing upon them the importance of the full freedom of movement of UNIFIL. Where required, the Lebanese Armed Forces intervened to bring a quick end to the incidents.

27. These incidents notwithstanding, UNIFIL relations with the local population remained generally positive, as supported by regular meetings and liaison activities with communities. Specific initiatives were carried out in villages that had seen incidents of unfriendly behaviour in the past. In Blida, for instance, road signs were erected in coordination with the Lebanese Armed Forces, to help to direct UNIFIL vehicular traffic along the main roads and avoid friction with the inhabitants.

28. UNIFIL implemented quick-impact projects in support of its mandate and participated in joint outreach activities with a wide range of United Nations

agencies and non-governmental and other organizations. UNIFIL continued to brief newly deployed contingents on the local environment, including vis-à-vis the Syrian refugees present in the area of operations. In cooperation with the international non-governmental organization Save the Children, UNFIL organized training for the mission's military personnel, with a view to raising their awareness of child protection. UNIFIL troops directly provided medical, dental and veterinary assistance and implemented projects in the areas of water and sanitation, education and environmental protection.

29. During the period, UNIFIL observed a number of individuals carrying hunting weapons south of the Litani River, in violation of resolution 1701 (2006). Most of the instances were observed in the areas of Bastara, Houla and Meiss ej-Jebel. In each case, UNIFIL tried to halt the hunting activity and notified the Lebanese Armed Forces of the violations.

30. UNIFIL continued to provide assistance to the Lebanese Armed Forces in taking steps to establish an area free of armed personnel, assets and weapons between the Blue Line and the Litani River, other than those of the Government of Lebanon and of UNIFIL. Incidents during the reporting period demonstrated that unauthorized weapons and hostile armed elements ready to use them were still present in the area of operations.

31. The Government of Israel continued to allege that Hizbullah had been building up its military presence inside populated areas in southern Lebanon and that unauthorized weapons were being transferred into Lebanon, including into the UNIFIL area of operations. If specific information is received regarding the illegal presence of armed personnel or weapons in its area of operations, UNIFIL, in cooperation with the Lebanese Armed Forces, remains determined to act with all means available within its mandate and to the full extent provided for in its rules of engagement. In accordance with its mandate, UNIFIL does not proactively search for weapons in the south. As described in my previous reports, UNIFIL cannot enter private property unless there is credible evidence of a violation of resolution 1701 (2006), including an imminent threat of hostile activity emanating from that specific location. To date, UNIFIL has neither been provided with, nor found, evidence of the unauthorized transfer of arms into its area of operations. The Lebanese Armed Forces Command continued to state that it would act immediately to put a stop to any activity in contravention of resolution 1701 (2006) and relevant Government decisions.

32. The UNIFIL Maritime Task Force continued to carry out its dual mandate of conducting maritime interdiction operations and training the Lebanese Armed Forces. Since my previous report, the Task Force hailed 1,526 ships, and the Lebanese navy and Customs officials inspected 422 vessels to verify that there were no unauthorized arms or related materiel on board. In addition, the Task Force conducted 90 training activities with the Lebanese navy.

33. Along the line of buoys, UNIFIL observed Israel Defense Forces patrol boats dropping eight depth charges and three flares, reportedly to ward off Lebanese fishing boats in the vicinity. Israel conducted two gunnery exercises in the vicinity of the line of buoys on the Israeli side, and maintenance on several buoys. UNIFIL has no mandate to monitor the line of buoys, which the Government of Israel installed unilaterally and which the Government of Lebanon does not recognize.

B. Security and liaison arrangements

34. The liaison and coordination arrangements between UNIFIL and the parties continued to serve as the foundation of the mission's work in implementing resolution 1701 (2006), safeguarding the cessation of hostilities, ensuring full respect for the Blue Line, and protecting security and stability in southern Lebanon. In that regard, the parties continued to engage constructively with UNIFIL, both at the tripartite and bilateral levels.

35. The tripartite forum chaired by the UNIFIL Force Commander remained the key mechanism for addressing all security and military operational issues related to the implementation of resolution 1701 (2006). During the reporting period, three tripartite meetings were held, on 4 and 16 December and 29 January.

36. Liaison and coordination arrangements were enhanced in the wake of the rocket launching on 29 December, with a simultaneous videoconferencing link between UNIFIL and the parties. This link should enable real-time exchange in the aftermath of a serious incident and assist UNIFIL in de-escalating tensions. Meanwhile, there was no progress in establishing a UNIFIL office in Tel Aviv.

37. On 9 January, the Government of Lebanon transmitted a complaint to the Security Council accusing the Government of Israel of waging an electronic war on Lebanon and its information and communication networks. The Lebanese Armed Forces also requested UNIFIL to take all possible measures to stop this Israeli aggression and to include telecommunications violations on the regular agenda of the tripartite meetings.

38. UNIFIL also continued to work with the parties to establish visible markers along the Blue Line. As at 29 January, UNIFIL had cleared 300 points from mines, measured 230 points, constructed 203 points and verified 182 points.

39. As part of its strategic priorities, and in complement to the efforts of the International Support Group to bolster the Lebanese Armed Forces, UNIFIL continued its work to facilitate the army's capacity-building for tasks mandated under resolution 1701 (2006) and focused on the area between the Litani River and the Blue Line. The Strategic Dialogue Permanent Committee, composed of representatives of the Lebanese Armed Forces, the Government of Lebanon (Ministry of Defence and Ministry of Foreign Affairs), UNIFIL and the United Nations Special Coordinator for Lebanon, met on 17 January and reviewed the scope, purpose and objectives of the strategic dialogue, in the context of the initiatives arising from the International Support Group, the recent donation pledged by Saudi Arabia, and the army's five-year development plan, of which the strategic dialogue is an integral part.

C. Disarming armed groups

40. Security Council resolution 1701 (2006) called for the full implementation of the relevant provisions of the Taif Accords, and of resolutions 1559 (2004) and 1680 (2006), which require the disarmament of all armed groups in Lebanon, so that there will be no weapons without the consent of the Government of Lebanon and no authority other than that of the Government of Lebanon.

41. The maintenance of arms by Hizbullah and other groups outside the control of the Lebanese State, in violation of resolutions 1559 (2004), 1680 (2006) and 1701

(2006), continues to restrict the State's ability to exercise full sovereignty and authority over its territory. Hizbullah continued to acknowledge publicly that it maintains a substantial military capacity separate from that of the Lebanese State, which it claims serves as a deterrent against potential aggression from Israel. The Government of Israel asserts that these weapons, including large quantities of missiles, constitute a serious threat. President Sleiman has continued to advocate the approach to the control of Hizbullah's arms contained in the national defence strategy paper that he presented as a basis for discussion in the National Dialogue in September 2012. No meetings of the National Dialogue were held during this reporting period.

42. Arms outside the control of the State continued to proliferate and undermine stability inside Lebanon. During the reporting period, there were repeated violent incidents, including terrorist bombings, assassinations and attacks on the Lebanese Armed Forces. On 19 November, a double suicide bombing in the Bir al-Abed neighbourhood of Beirut targeted the Iranian Embassy, killing at least 23 people and injuring more than 140. On 4 December, Hassan Laqis, a Hizbullah commander, was assassinated in Beirut. On 15 December, there were two attacks on Lebanese army checkpoints in Sidon, which killed one soldier and five of the purported attackers. On 17 December, a car bomb exploded in the Beqaa valley near a point reported to be a Hizbullah training camp and reportedly caused two fatalities. On 27 December, former Minister Mohammed Chattah, a senior adviser to former Prime Minister Saad Hariri, was assassinated by a car bomb in Beirut, which also killed five other people. A suicide bombing in the Beirut suburb of Haret Hraik killed 5 people and injured 77 on 2 January. In the Beqaa valley town of Hermel, 3 people were killed and 26 injured in a 16 January car bomb. On 21 January, another suicide bombing in Haret Hraik killed 4 people and injured 35. On 1 February, a suicide bomber detonated a car bomb in Hermel, killing three, and on 3 February a suicide attack in Choueifat in south Beirut killed the suicide bomber and wounded two people. The Al-Qaeda-linked groups Jabhat al-Nusra and Islamic State of Iraq and al-Sham have variously claimed responsibility for some of these attacks.

43. In Tripoli, there was recurrent violence during the reporting period between the predominantly Sunni neighbourhood of Bab al-Tabbaneh and the neighbouring Alawite area of Jabel Mohsen. Clashes on 30 November resulted in 12 fatalities, including one Lebanese soldier, and over 70 injuries. On 2 December, caretaker Prime Minister Najib Mikati announced that the Lebanese Armed Forces would assume control of security in Tripoli and that security services in the city would be reinforced and put under their command. One Lebanese soldier was subsequently killed and six others injured on 5 December during patrols to secure the city. Members of the Alawite community were targeted by gunmen in a number of attacks, including on 11 December when two Alawite men were shot and seriously wounded by unknown gunmen. Outbreaks of violence in Tripoli during January led to at least seven fatalities, including one Lebanese soldier, and over 48 casualties, including at least five Lebanese soldiers.

44. The Lebanese Armed Forces continued to deploy across the country to prevent attacks, contain violence and confront and detain armed elements. The Lebanese Armed Forces defused car bombs, including in the Bekaa valley on 22 November and in Zahle on 29 November. On 22 December, the Lebanese Armed Forces deployed in the Bekaa town of Souairi to contain an armed clash between two families that had caused four fatalities. On 30 December, it was reported that Majed

al-Majed, the commander of the extremist Abdallah Azzam Brigades, which had claimed responsibility for, inter alia, the Iranian Embassy bombing, was seriously ill and in the custody of Army Intelligence. Al-Majed died in custody on 4 January. The Lebanese Armed Forces confronted other militants from the Abdullah Azzam Brigades and military prosecutors charged suspects with membership in the organization. On 22 January, Omar Atrash, a Sunni militant wanted in connection with recent attacks was arrested. On 12 February, Naim Abbas, reportedly a senior leader of the Abdullah Azzam Brigades was arrested, and two car bombs were discovered and dismantled. Military magistrates have sentenced a number of those accused of responsibility for car bombs, including sentencing to death nine suspects on 3 December for their involvement in a failed plot to bomb the southern suburb of Maamoura in October.

45. There has been no progress on the dismantling of military bases maintained by the Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine-General Command and Fatah al-Intifada. In 2006, it was decided in the National Dialogue that these bases should be dismantled. Their existence continues to compromise Lebanese sovereignty and impede the ability of the State to monitor and control effectively parts of the Lebanese-Syrian border.

46. The Palestinian refugee camp of Ein el-Helweh and the neighbouring Taamir area have been used as a refuge by militant Sunni elements, allegedly including fugitive Ahmed Assir. On 1 December, militants from the Jund al-Sham group killed a member of Fatah and injured two others. In violence over the next two days, two others were injured. On 25 December, a car bomb exploded in Ein el-Helweh without causing casualties. On 1 February, one individual with links to Fatah was killed by two unidentified gunmen in Ein el-Helweh.

D. Arms embargo and border control

47. In its resolution 1701 (2006), the Security Council decided that all States should prevent the sale or the supply of arms and related materiel to entities or individuals in Lebanon by their nationals or from their territories or using their flag vessels or aircraft. It also called upon the Government of Lebanon to secure its borders and other entry points to prevent the entry into Lebanon without its consent of arms and related materiel.

48. Representatives of the Government of Israel have consistently alleged that there are significant, ongoing arms transfers to Hizbullah across the Lebanese-Syrian border. The United Nations takes these allegations seriously but is not in a position to independently verify them. Representatives of the Government of Israel have continued to express grave concern at the prospect of the transfer of advanced weapons systems to Hizbullah. Hizbullah has denied allegations that chemical weapons have been transferred to it and maintains that it does not intend to acquire them.

49. The Lebanese Armed Forces deployed in border areas to counter the movement of armed elements between Lebanon and the Syrian Arab Republic. In multiple incidents in December and January, Lebanese soldiers arrested Syrians near the border with the Syrian Arab Republic, some of whom were in possession of arms. On 21 December, there was a report of a number of casualties as a result of fighting near the Bekaa valley village of Nahle, apparently between Hizbullah

fighters and armed members of the Syrian opposition. On 30 January, the Lebanese Armed Forces intercepted a vehicle loaded with arms as it crossed from the Syrian Arab Republic and attempted to enter the Bekaa town of Arsal.

50. During the reporting period, there were repeated incidents of shooting, cross-border shelling and rockets fired into Lebanon from the Syrian Arab Republic, causing a number of injuries and material damage. On 17 January, rockets struck the border town of Arsal, killing seven people and injuring seven others. On 31 January, one Lebanese citizen was killed and several injured in Akkar by shelling from within the Syrian Arab Republic. There were also at least five air strikes within Lebanon by a Syrian Government aircraft and helicopters, in which two Lebanese citizens were reportedly killed. Following statements by the Lebanese authorities of their intention to defend Lebanon from violations of its sovereignty, the Lebanese Armed Forces fired back at Syrian aircraft in Lebanese airspace on 30 December.

51. Hizbullah publicly acknowledged its continued involvement in the fighting in the Syrian Arab Republic and held funerals for Hizbullah fighters killed there. Other Lebanese elements are reported to be engaged in fighting alongside the Syrian opposition. President Sleiman has continued to call upon all parties to adhere to the policy of disassociation agreed in the Baabda Declaration during the National Dialogue session of June 2012.

52. The influx of Syrian refugees into Lebanon has continued to grow. As at 15 February, 927,000 Syrians had registered or were seeking registration with UNHCR, almost 80 per cent of whom are women and children. This includes 42,900 registered refugees in the UNIFIL area of operations. Additionally, 52,000 Palestine refugees from the Syrian Arab Republic have sought refuge in Lebanon but since August 2013, they have faced restrictions on entering Lebanon. On 16 December, the United Nations launched the sixth Syria Regional Response Plan, appealing for $1.7 billion for Lebanon, including an appeal for $165 million presented by the Government. This appeal covers humanitarian needs for a projected 1.5 million Syrian refugees, 100,000 Palestine refugees from the Syrian Arab Republic, 50,000 Lebanese returnees and 1.5 million affected Lebanese through the end of 2014. Funding for the fifth Regional Response Plan (2013) reached 51 per cent of its $1.6 billion goal. Many refugees continue to live in substandard accommodation and lack access to basic services, including clean water and sanitation. Provision of adequate shelter remains a particular challenge given the dispersal of refugees in over 1,600 localities throughout Lebanon.

53. Humanitarian partners continued implementing their winterization programme to mitigate the additional challenges posed by colder temperatures. United Nations agencies are also scaling up their interventions to extend additional support for host communities. To guide the national response and mitigate the socioeconomic and humanitarian impact on Lebanon, the World Bank, the United Nations and the Government of Lebanon jointly produced the Road map of Priority Interventions for Stabilization from the Syrian Conflict, presented by the Government at the Second International Humanitarian Pledging Conference for Syria, held in Kuwait City. The multi-donor trust fund referred to in paragraph 7 above was established as an additional option for channelling assistance.

54. The situation for Syrian refugee women and girls in Lebanon, as elsewhere, remains particularly difficult. Coping mechanisms for survival include prostitution, sex offered in return for assistance and early marriage of girls. Further protection

and support mechanisms are needed to combat reported sexual exploitation, physical abuse and harassment.

E. Landmines and cluster bombs

55. Eight manual mine clearance teams, two explosive ordnance disposal teams and one mechanical mine clearance team from UNIFIL were validated by the United Nations Mine Action Support Team and deployed in the UNIFIL area of operations during the reporting period. UNIFIL cleared more than 1,656 m^2 of hazardous land to provide access to Blue Line points and found and destroyed 66 anti-personnel mines during the period from 1 November to 2 February. Furthermore, the Team conducted 27 validation events, 84 quality assurance visits of operational sites and 82 visits, meetings and demonstrations. It also provided explosive ordnance awareness training to 15 members of Observer Group Lebanon and 11 UNIFIL staff members as part of the course "Safe and secure approach to field environments".

56. The Lebanese Mine Action Centre reported that, during the period from 1 November to 31 January, it had cleared 559,334 m^2 of hazardous land, including minefields and battle areas, and destroyed 709 cluster munition items, 210 unexploded ordnance and eight anti-personnel mines.

F. Delineation of borders

57. No progress was made during the reporting period towards the delineation or demarcation of the Lebanese-Syrian border, including in areas where it is uncertain or disputed, as called for in Security Council resolutions 1680 (2006) and 1701 (2006). Extending the authority of the Government of Lebanon throughout all Lebanese territory and enabling the Lebanese security forces and Lebanese Armed Forces to secure borders to prevent the entry of arms or related materiel necessitates the delineation and demarcation of the border between Lebanon and the Syrian Arab Republic as soon as practicable.

58. There has also been no progress on the issue of the Shab'a Farms. There has still been no reaction to the provisional definition of that area contained in my report of 30 October 2007 on the implementation of resolution 1701 (2006) (S/2007/641) from either Israel or the Syrian Arab Republic.

III. Security and safety of the United Nations Interim Force in Lebanon

59. UNIFIL continued to cooperate closely with the Lebanese authorities to ensure the safety and security of all Mission personnel, in addition to applying its own risk mitigation measures, continuously reviewing its security plan and carrying out safety awareness training for its personnel.

60. UNIFIL continued to monitor proceedings in the Lebanese Military Court against individuals suspected of planning or perpetrating serious attacks against UNIFIL peacekeepers. In two cases of serious attacks in 2008 pending at the Military Court of Appeal and the Permanent Court of first instance respectively, hearings were scheduled for 27 March and 2 May. In two cases of serious attacks

perpetrated in 2007 and 2011, the investigations have not identified the suspected perpetrators as yet and both cases remain open pending new evidence. The investigation is still ongoing in two other cases of serious attacks perpetrated in 2011. A new investigation was launched following the arrest on 20 January of a person suspected of preparing terrorist attacks against UNIFIL.

IV. Deployment of the United Nations Interim Force in Lebanon

61. As at 27 January, the total military strength of UNIFIL was 10,113, including 365 women. The civilian component consisted of 301 international and 634 national staff, including 90 and 160 women, respectively. A total of 52 United Nations Truce Supervision Organization military observers, including two women, are also part of UNIFIL.

62. In November, the Irish-Finnish battalion completed its rotation; it is now composed of two Finnish companies and one Irish company. In January, the Malaysian battalion completed its redeployment from Sector East to Sector West.

63. As at 27 January, the Maritime Task Force consisted of three frigates, four fast patrol boats and two helicopters.

V. Observations

64. Despite the serious incidents and provocations during the reporting period, relative stability has been maintained in southern Lebanon and along the Blue Line. This is notable given the situation elsewhere in Lebanon and in the region. Sustaining this calm is important in maintaining the fragile stability in Lebanon and for regional security. I commend the Lebanese Armed Forces and the Israel Defense Forces for their resolve in safeguarding the cessation of hostilities through the utilization of the presence of UNIFIL, particularly its liaison and coordination arrangements. I am also encouraged by the parties' continued willingness to engage with UNIFIL on constructive confidence-building measures. The number of recent incidents across Lebanon further underlines the imperative for the parties to continue to prevent any escalatory developments along the Blue Line.

65. I remain concerned at the lack of progress towards achieving a permanent ceasefire to the conflict, as envisaged in resolution 1701 (2006). My Special Coordinator and UNIFIL have continued to emphasize the need for the parties to work towards that goal by taking tangible steps and laying the groundwork for future progress. I continue to encourage the parties to recommit to a permanent ceasefire and to work with my Special Coordinator and UNIFIL to achieve that aim.

66. I regret the tragic killing of a soldier of the Israel Defense Forces on 15 December. This deplorable act by a Lebanese Armed Forces soldier could have led to a major escalation, were it not for the collective efforts of UNIFIL and the parties.

67. I condemn the firing of rockets on 29 December. Such hostile actions, in serious breach of resolution 1701 (2006) and of the cessation of hostilities, gravely endanger human lives and threaten to unravel peace and security in the area. The Lebanese authorities have the primary responsibility to ensure that there are no

unauthorized armed personnel, assets or weapons in the area between the Blue Line and the Litani River and to prevent any attempts to use Lebanese territory for hostile actions. Notwithstanding every country's right to self-defence, retaliatory fire by Israel does not conform to United Nations expectations with respect to the cessation of hostilities. These expectations include that each party immediately notify UNIFIL if it has been fired upon and refrain from responding, except where clearly required in immediate self-defence. This would allow UNIFIL in the first instance to effectively deal with the attack by coordinating an immediate security and investigative response.

68. Major obligations under the resolution remain outstanding and require action by both parties. The imperative to remove unauthorized weapons from the UNIFIL area of operations remains a long-term endeavour with added urgency in the light of the increasingly fragile stability in Lebanon.

69. In addition, I remain concerned that overflights of Lebanese territory and territorial waters continue to be committed almost daily by Israel in violation of Lebanese sovereignty and of resolution 1701 (2006). I call again upon the Government of Israel to cease all violations of Lebanese airspace.

70. The continued occupation by the Israel Defense Forces of the northern part of the village of Ghajar and an adjacent area north of the Blue Line constitutes a continuing violation of resolution 1701 (2006). Israel has an obligation to withdraw its armed forces from northern Ghajar, in accordance with the resolution.

71. I welcome the continued progress in the visible marking of the Blue Line, which has contributed to preventing inadvertent ground violations. The commitment of the parties to continue working with UNIFIL, including on contentious or problematic points, will be vital to the completion of this process. Notwithstanding their respective reservations, both sides have undertaken to respect the Blue Line, as identified by the United Nations, in its entirety.

72. I remain concerned that incidents that impede the freedom of movement of UNIFIL and endanger the safety and security of peacekeepers continue to occur. The freedom of movement of UNIFIL and the security and safety of its personnel are integral to the effective execution of its tasks, in accordance with resolutions 1701 (2006) and 1773 (2007). The primary responsibility for ensuring the freedom of movement of UNIFIL in its area of operations lies with the Lebanese authorities.

73. Lebanon continues to be affected adversely by the conflict in the Syrian Arab Republic. I deplore the shelling, shooting and aerial incursions into Lebanese border areas from the Syrian Arab Republic, as well as the movement of armed fighters and war materiel between the two countries. The lack of progress in delineating and demarcating the border between the two countries is no justification for violations of Lebanese sovereignty by any party. I call upon the Government of the Syrian Arab Republic and all parties fighting there to cease violations of the border and to respect the sovereignty and territorial integrity of Lebanon in accordance with Security Council resolutions 1559 (2004), 1680 (2006) and 1701 (2006).

74. I condemn the participation of Lebanese citizens in the conflict in the Syrian Arab Republic in breach of the policies of neutrality and disassociation adopted by the Government of Lebanon and of the principles of the Baabda Declaration of June 2012, which was agreed upon by all of Lebanon's political leaders. I call upon all Lebanese parties to step back from any involvement in the Syrian conflict,

consistent with their commitment in the Baabda Declaration, and urge them instead to act in the interests of Lebanon and to recommit to the policy of disassociation.

75. The Security Council strongly condemned the numerous terrorist acts in Lebanon during the reporting period, which cost many lives and caused great suffering to many innocent Lebanese. This is a new and dangerous dimension in the present crisis. The terrorist groups perpetrating these acts threaten the security of all Lebanese people. I reiterate my call for unity on the part of all parties in Lebanon in the face of such threat. I call upon all the Lebanese people to stand behind their State institutions, including the army and security forces, as the best means to confront such unacceptable and indiscriminate actions. The recurrent rounds of violence in Tripoli remain of deep concern. Violence and attacks against the Lebanese Armed Forces in that city and elsewhere reflect the unacceptable proliferation of weapons outside the authority of the State. In that regard, I call upon Member States to uphold their obligation under resolution 1701 (2006) to prevent the sale or supply of arms or related materiel to entities or individuals in Lebanon. Continued broad political support is needed for the security and judicial authorities to combat impunity in respect of all acts of violence. The assassination of former Minister Mohammed Chattah was a deeply disturbing reminder of earlier crimes. The opening of the trial in the Special Tribunal for Lebanon illustrates the refusal of Lebanon and the international community to acquiesce in impunity.

76. The maintenance of arms by Hizbullah and other groups outside the control of the State continues to pose a threat to Lebanese sovereignty and stability and contradicts the country's obligations under resolutions 1559 (2004) and 1701 (2006). President Sleiman has reiterated the urgency of the adoption of a national defence strategy in the light of the use of Hizbullah's arms outside Lebanon. I urge the parties to resume the National Dialogue to address the issue of arms. A return to the Dialogue could be useful in addressing other issues as well, including building upon the Baabda Declaration. I commend President Sleiman for his leadership in taking forward this and other crucial dossiers. With the approach of the end of his term of office, the principles agreed in the Baabda Declaration received further support in the National Charter of the Maronite Patriarchate, published on 9 February. I further reiterate my call for the implementation of earlier decisions of the National Dialogue, specifically those relating to the disarmament of the non-Lebanese groups and the dismantling of the military bases of the Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine-General Command and Fatah al-Intifada.

77. I warmly welcome the formation of the new Government of Lebanon and commend Prime Minister Tammam Salam for the efforts to bring about an inclusive outcome. I urge Lebanon's political leaders to build on their constructive engagement in order to sustain and build up the vital institutions of the State in the face of continuing adversity. It is of crucial importance for confidence and stability that the presidential election be conducted successfully within the legal and constitutional time frame. Equally important is the need to take steps to ensure that parliamentary elections are held thereafter without delay and in accordance with the Constitution. I pay tribute to outgoing Prime Minister Najib Mikati for his leadership. Given the severity of the security, humanitarian and economic challenges facing Lebanon, it is essential for the Government to be able to act effectively without delay to address such challenges with the full support of all parties. Such cooperation is also essential for the effective implementation of Security Council resolution 1701 (2006) and other relevant resolutions, as well as

for the continued commitment to the Baabda Declaration, which remain crucial to Lebanon's stability.

78. The international community has reason to be grateful for the continued open border policy of Lebanon and its generous efforts in hosting and assisting Syrian refugees. Lebanon hosts the largest number of refugees from the Syrian Arab Republic in both absolute terms and relative to population. The burden of such a large number of refugees, proportionally greater than in any other country in the world, on so small and fragile a State is huge. It drains its resources and has severe impacts on stability. I commend the response by the Government of Lebanon, including during the sudden refugee influx into the town of Arsal in November. Whatever Government is in place in the coming period, it is crucial that it have strong mechanisms in place to coordinate, in partnership with the United Nations, both the refugee response and support for host communities. However, this is a burden that must be shared. I am grateful to all the donors who have contributed to the appeals for Syrian refugees in Lebanon to date. While I am encouraged by the additional commitments made at the pledging conference I chaired in Kuwait in January, the shortfall in 2013 — and potentially in 2014 — was very large. Early delivery on pledges made is crucial for the sake of the refugees. More assistance will be needed in the coming months. Additionally, given the acute pressures on government services, local administration and host communities, it is vital that programmes envisaged in the road map for stabilization presented by the Government be funded, including through the multi-donor trust fund that has now been established. Lastly, it is encouraging that a number of Member States have opened their door to at least a measure of resettlement: programmes of this sort are important both for securing assistance to the most vulnerable and as a signal to neighbouring countries such as Lebanon of the international community's commitment to burden-sharing.

79. I commend the Lebanese Armed Forces for its continued commitment and strong cooperation with UNIFIL and for the role that it plays in upholding Lebanese commitments under resolution 1701 (2006). In addition to playing a key role in the preservation of stability along the Blue Line, the Lebanese Armed Forces addressed the multiple threats to Lebanon's security and stability in other parts of the country. This included efforts to secure the areas bordering the Syrian Arab Republic and to combat terrorism and maintain stability in Lebanon against the daunting challenges posed by the impact of the Syrian crisis. My Special Coordinator and UNIFIL have worked with the Lebanese Armed Forces to finalize coordination mechanisms to facilitate additional donor support in response to the five-year capabilities development programme and to the strategic dialogue plan, which seeks to support the gradual assumption by the Lebanese Armed Forces of security control in the UNIFIL area of operations. It is encouraging that work in this area is moving forward. I welcome the generous offer of assistance for the Lebanese Armed Forces by Saudi Arabia, which was announced by President Sleiman. I also welcome the offer of the Government of Italy to host an international conference to help to stimulate and channel additional support to the Lebanese Armed Forces. I encourage the international community to further contribute to strengthening the Lebanese Armed Forces, including its naval capacity, drawing on the five-year capabilities development plan and also with respect to its activities towards the implementation of resolution 1701 (2006) south of the Litani River, as facilitated by the UNIFIL strategic dialogue.

80. I thank the Member States participating in the International Support Group for their continued commitment to Lebanon. Their cooperation has helped to generate important momentum on the assistance agendas mentioned above and underlines on an ongoing basis international support for Lebanon's security and stability and for State institutions, as well as for Lebanon's policy of disassociation. I look forward to working closely with them to the same ends in the coming period and welcome in that regard the intention of France to host a ministerial meeting of the Group.

81. The security situation in the Palestinian refugee camp of Ein el-Helweh is of concern and I welcome the efforts of Palestinian camp leaders to work with the Lebanese authorities to maintain order. The need to improve the living conditions of Palestine refugees in Lebanon, without prejudice to the resolution of the refugee question in the context of a comprehensive peace settlement, is ever more urgent. The Palestinian refugee camps are still more crowded as a result of the growing numbers of Palestine refugees displaced from the Syrian Arab Republic. I encourage donors to be forthcoming in support of UNRWA, including to enable it to assist displaced Palestine refugees from the Syrian Arab Republic.

82. Regrettably no progress has been made with regard to the Shab'a Farms area in accordance with paragraph 10 of resolution 1701 (2006). I call, once again, on Syria and Israel to submit their responses to the provisional definition of the Shab'a Farms area that I provided in October 2007 (S/2007/641).

83. For both Lebanon and Israel the development of their oil and gas reserves is a national priority. I encourage both countries to continue efforts to address the delimitation of their respective maritime exclusive zones and the exploration and exploitation of their natural resources in a manner that facilitates this and does not give rise to tensions. The United Nations remains ready to assist in this matter should both parties so request.

84. Lebanon is going through a very difficult period. Its resilience in the face of challenges arising from the conflict in the neighbouring Syrian Arab Republic has been impressive, but the threats, including from terrorism, have increased sharply in recent months. It is imperative that the international community remains united and committed in its support for Lebanon. Equally it is crucial that all parties in Lebanon come together in addressing the multiple challenges to its stability. The calm prevailing across the Blue Line makes a vital contribution to Lebanon's stability, and to the security and well-being of the peoples of both countries. Longer-term security and stability call for an end to conflict in the region, including progress towards a just, lasting and comprehensive peace. Notwithstanding the evident difficulties I will continue to do all in my power to further these goals.

85. I wish to express my appreciation to all countries contributing troops and equipment to UNIFIL and Observer Group Lebanon. I also commend the UNIFIL Head of Mission and Force Commander and the military and the civilian personnel of UNIFIL, as well as my Special Coordinator for Lebanon and the staff of his Office, all of whom continue to play a critical role in helping to promote stability along the Blue Line and in Lebanon.